



Virginia Department of Planning and Budget  
**Project Request Justification**

2006-2008

Biennium

Date: July 22, 2005

**A. General Information**

1. Agency name: Virginia Tech      2. Agency code: 208
3. Project title: Renovate Liberal Arts Building      4. Agency priority: 5
5. Contact Person: M. Dwight Shelton, Jr.
6. Contact's telephone number: (540) 231-8775
7. Contact's e-mail address: mdsjr@vt.edu

**B. Proposed Project**

1. Project Cost:

General Fund/General Fund supported debt	5,850,000
Nongeneral fund	
9 (c) revenue debt	
NGF supported 9 (d) revenue bonds	
<b>Total request</b>	<b>5,850,000</b>

2. Project cost changes:

NONE.

3. Description:

- This project has been on the university's plan since 1993, formerly titled Renovation of Performing Arts Building. The project was renamed to more accurately reflect the intended programmatic use of the facility after the renovation is complete.
- The Liberal Arts Building was built in 1899 and is located in the heart of the academic campus. It is one of the most outdated buildings on campus, with extensive egress and ADA deficiencies. Building electrical, HVAC, plumbing and controls systems are well past their useful life and are operating by means of stopgap repairs, and repairs to the exterior envelope are needed to stop continuing deterioration.
- The requested project scope will fully renovate the 15,900 gross square foot building including exterior envelope repairs, HVAC and ventilation systems replacement, plumbing system replacement, electrical system replacement, hazardous material abatement, and provision of accessible circulation and exiting meeting life safely requirements.

- The renovations scope of the project is established to renew the building and serve as quality academic space in the core of the liberal arts zone of campus and should extend the useful life of the building for about 50 years.
- The proposed program will be 100 percent Educational and General and thus the funding plan calls for 100 percent state support.

**4. Project scope change:**

NONE.

**5. a. Approved Master Site Plan:  
If not, explain:**

Yes  No

**b. 2004-10 Capital Outlay Plan:  
If not, explain:**

Yes  No

**6. Equipment for a previously funded project.**

NONE.

**7. Supplement to a previously funded project.**

NONE.

**C. Project Justification**

**1. a. Existing condition:**

- The Liberal Arts Building was constructed in 1899 as a YMCA building. The building currently houses the Theater Arts programs and the School of the Arts instructional spaces. The Theater Arts and School of the Arts programs will move to a newly renovated Henderson Hall in 2007 as part of the 2002 General Obligation Bond program.
- The relocation of Theater Arts and School of the Arts spaces to Henderson will vacate all of the building and allow a complete interior renovation to be undertaken to provide critical academic spaces for three new programs and to alleviate serious overcrowding in the English department.
- The programs envisioned to occupy a renovated Liberal Arts Building include a new, approved interdisciplinary program in the liberal arts -- the innovative Alliance for Social, Political, Ethical, and Cultural Thought (ASPECT) and two graduate writing programs in the English department.

- The ASPECT program currently has no formal space. The program includes 12 faculty who are occupying whatever space is available from faculty on leave or who have left and not yet been replaced. Until adequate space is established, the faculty are scattered across various departments and buildings. The graduate teaching assistants involved in the program work from their homes and sign up to meet with students in a central room or are squeezed into already crowded offices.
- In addition to housing the ASPECT program, there is a serious need for space for two new graduate writing programs, and to relieve a current shortage of space in the department of English. A Masters of Fine Arts in Creative Writing, already approved, and a PhD in Rhetoric and Writing, in process, will increase the number of faculty, staff and graduate teaching assistants in the department of English. There is already a critical space shortage with 20 full-time teaching faculty sharing offices, and graduate teaching assistants four to an office. Thus, existing space is not available to house the new programs.

**Higher Education Only**

**b. Facility Condition Index:**

FCI 57.7

**c. Space deficit:**

Yes  No

**2. Programmatic information:**

- The completed renovation project will provide needed space for a new, approved interdisciplinary program in the liberal arts. The innovative Alliance for Social, Political, Ethical, and Cultural Thought (ASPECT) will prepare doctoral students to conduct sophisticated interdisciplinary research on complex contemporary issues.
- The renovated Liberal Arts Building will be used first for faculty and graduate teaching assistant offices to provide adequate work and student advising privacy. As space permits, the building will also contain classrooms, conference/seminar rooms and computer laboratories. The advantage of using this building for the proposed purposes is that it is adjacent to the main buildings housing the English department and the departments involved in the ASPECT program - history, philosophy, political science and interdisciplinary studies.
- Major research universities do not rely solely on their engineering and science departments to attract high quality students and external research funds. They are known also for their strong liberal arts departments. As part of its strategy to be among the top 30 research institutions, Virginia Tech is selectively building on its current strengths in liberal arts through the additions of the highly innovative ASPECT program, modeled after comparable programs at major research institutions; the masters degree in creative writing, and the PhD in rhetoric and writing. These programs will offer unique educational opportunities in southwest Virginia where no similar programs exist at state institutions, and for in- and out-of-state students seeking creative approaches to education and career. The rhetoric and writing program, when approved, will be the first in Virginia.
- The proposals for full implementation of the three programs plus existing shortages in English indicate that approximately 35 faculty and 25 graduate teaching assistant (2 to a

room) offices are needed, along with seminar, conference, lab and staff support space. The primary beneficiaries of occupying the Liberal Arts building will be undergraduate and graduate students. Not only will they have the opportunity to participate in exciting new programs leading to careers in emerging markets, but the space provided will be suitable in its adequacy and design. Relief from the serious space shortage in English will benefit majors in all departments as every student has contact with the department while satisfying basic English requirements.

### **3. Alignment to strategic plan:**

This project will support Virginia Tech's strategic plan in the areas of Graduate Education and Undergraduate Education. Renovation of the Liberal Arts Building will address ADA and code compliance, extend its useful life, and provide improved academic space in support of the following university goals:

Graduate Education:

1. Increase the quality of the graduate programs.

Undergraduate Education:

1. Maintain a current, relevant, and comprehensive undergraduate curriculum.
2. Strengthen the quality of undergraduate instruction.
3. Create learning experiences for undergraduate students that maximize the benefits of attending a large research university.

## **D. Options Considered**

Other options considered but not selected include constructing a new facility or delaying the project entirely. Renovating the current building is the selected option because it is the most efficient choice for replacing obsolete academic space in the central area of campus.

Constructing a new facility is not a favorable option because of limited open areas to build on in the central academic section of campus. The cost to raze and replace the building in central campus exceed the cost to renovate.

Delaying the project to a future biennium is not a viable option because the building requires extensive repairs now to avoid further deterioration and to fully meet ADA standards. In addition, the renovations will significantly improve the functionality of the building to meet increasing demand for academic space.

## **E. Project Schedule Changes:**

NONE.